

9 NOV 1966

SUBJECT: Conversation with Lieut. General Wonsel  
German Federal Republic Representative  
on the NATO Military Standing Group

- DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCES METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2005

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had not changed. Since Gehlen has consistently for many years spoken of Wessel as his probable successor, this would seem to indicate that Gehlen is also aware of recent activity in this matter.

6. Wessel has taken no actions in recent years to support his own candidacy for the top END post. His wife is strongly opposed to his return to the END; she has been a highly successful hostess in Washington and obviously enjoys an existence unburdened by the demands of life in the END with which she is quite familiar.

7. Wessel assumes that Gehlen will stay on until at least early 1968; his own assignment to the END in 1967 as deputy is an obvious possibility. Also, he does not rule out the possibility that General Wendland (G Wandt, G Holm) might be named to the number 1 post of the END if Gehlen retires. It is my impression that Wessel is entirely relaxed and quite flexible regarding his own future.

8. I place Wessel among the two or three most intelligent, balanced and sophisticated senior German officials known to me. His years in Paris with Speidel, his experience in Bonn as J-2 and later a Division Commander, and, finally, his years in Washington on the NATO Standing Group have brought him a long way from his not undistinguished beginning as the youthful chief of "Foreign Armies East" during the closing months of WW II.

9. I have no evidence that Wessel has remained in close touch with the END; specifically, there have been no indications of his conversations with me having been reported to Gehlen. While his relations with the local END representative, [ ] , have been cordial, it is quite clear that he does not report to him. For example, Wessel's conversation with the Director leading to the invitation to Gehlen to visit Washington was not communicated by Wessel to either [ ] or to Gehlen.

10. Were Wessel to emerge as head of the German Service, I would have quite a lot to say regarding the consequences of this appointment to CIA and to the USG and the manner in which CIA's relations with the END, under his leadership, should be conducted.

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11. On the whole, the current crisis in Germany's political leadership would not seem to be damaging to the prospects of either Gehlen or Wessel. I would guess that Wessel, at this point, enjoys respects in many German government and political circles--quite independent of, and in some instances in spite of, his long association with Gehlen.

/s/ James H. Critchfield

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cc: DBP  
C/EUR  
C/CI  
C/SB

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